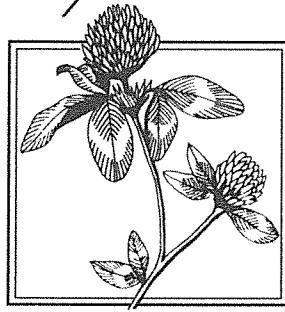


# Litchfield Woods



HEALTH CARE CENTER

*February 11, 2016*

***Written testimony of Denise Quarles, Administrator, Litchfield Woods Health Care Center, Concerning the Governor's Recommended FY 2016 and FY 2017 Proposed Budget***

Good evening Senator Bye, Representative Walker and to the members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Denise Quarles. I am Administrator at Litchfield Woods Health Care Center in Torrington, Connecticut. Litchfield Woods Health Care Center is a longstanding provider of nursing and rehabilitation care in Litchfield County. Litchfield Woods is a 160 bed skilled nursing facility with just under 300 employees. We continuously work on quality improvement programs in our nursing facility. We are well below the state average in terms of meeting many goals. Some such areas include health care associated infections, falls, falls with significant injury, facility acquired pressure ulcers, and 30 day hospital re-admission rates.

I am very proud to say I have been the administrator of Litchfield Woods since 2006. I have a team of devoted caregivers, from RNs, LPNs, to C.N.A staff. We all have the same goal----that is to deliver the highest quality care experience to anyone who comes to Litchfield Woods. And these workers are doing an amazing job! I am so grateful to them, and proud of them, for everything they are doing.

But making the care great has so many challenges. Making the care what everyone wants for their loved ones is getting harder and harder. And the reason it's getting so hard isn't really difficult to understand---there has been almost no help in the budget for now going on 10 years. While the budget proposal doesn't now have a specific nursing home reduction, if passed as is, it will be a decade of nearly flat funding for our nursing facility. The idea that our nursing facility could be cut this session because of our state's ongoing financial troubles is so devastating. It is really beyond my ability to understand how we could deliver quality care under these circumstances.

I do want to say how grateful we are that money was included in last year's budget for our nursing home workers. Acknowledging the critically important job being done every day with wage and benefit increases for our caregivers is so important to our mission to deliver high quality care.

255 Roberts Street • Torrington, CT 06790 • (860) 489-3801 • Fax (860) 489-6102

Managed by Athena Health Care Systems, Leaders in Health Care

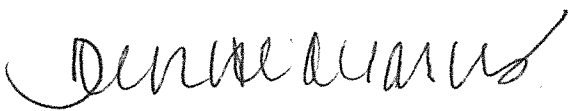
<http://www.athenahealthcare.com/torrington.htm>

But we under so many additional pressures beyond the important need to pay our workers a fair wage for the great jobs they are doing. Here are some examples:

- Expenses have significantly increased for items like electricity, gas, food, medication, and medical supplies.
- Here at Litchfield Woods Health Care Center the needs of our residents are also increasing. The acuity of our residents is so much more complex as our population ages. The patients coming in are clinically compromised, requiring more nursing time. Programs like Money Follows the Person and Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders, have impacted the type of residents admitted to our facility. We applaud these community programs that offer long-term care options that maximize autonomy, dignity, and choice. However, skilled nursing facilities are then admitting patients with a higher acuity, costing more for the nursing home whom is committed to providing quality care and services. But the residents that come to us need to be with us. The needs are too complex to be cared for in the community.
- Finding qualified, compassionate staff can be challenging as well as expensive. It is important to screen all employees to ensure that the very best are hired to care for our vulnerable, elderly population.

Please help us deliver the high quality care we want to deliver and that our residents deserve!

On behalf of residents and staff at Litchfield Woods Health Care Center I want to thank you for your attention to this and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



Denise Quarles,  
Administrator